

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Editorial

IMPORTANT NOTICE

There will be no issue of the Brethren Evangelist next week. Please make a note of this. No paper next week.

Lead Thou Me

Perhaps this is not so apt to be the prayer of confident youth, which in the pride of its strength is inclined to lean to its own understanding, and neglect counsel. The ripper experience of middle age arrives, and we are not so sure that we can guide our own course, unaided, thru the labyrinth of this world. Old age comes, and then we feel that in all the long journey we have needed the divine leading, O so much, and have gone astray so often because we did not seek that leading. We also realize that in many things and in many ways the Father's love has led us, even when we sought it not, else how can we account for this miracle of escape, for that unexpected wisdom of decision. Our feet had all but gone in a way of destruction, but were held back by some little thing. We journeyed a path of prosperity which no wisdom of our own had foreseen. So hitherto the Lord hath led us, allowing enough mistakes to teach us our dependence upon him, to teach us humility, and wisdom, enough to chasten our pride of intellect, and lead us to "stay our minds upon the Lord," and find his "perfect peace."

How We Deceive Ourselves

St. John says, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." But how few of us would be so presumptuous as to say "We have no sin?" Certainly none of us would. We are too well trained biblically and our consciences are too sensitive for that. But there are other ways in which the same idea can be expressed, and there are many of us today who, in reality, are deceiving ourselves in one way or another. For instance, we balance the sins committed by certain virtues that we impute to ourselves. We keep a debtor and creditor account. We attend church on Sunday, probably the mid-week prayer meeting, perhaps we say our prayers, as the phrase goes, perhaps we read our Bible if business or pleasure permits. Because we do these things in a perfunctory way we reckon ourselves righteous. This is self-deception of the most ancient type. Thus the Jews deceived themselves. They gave to God everything except what God wanted them to give. God demanded and yet demands righteousness of his people, but many in common with the Jews are ready to give him anything else. Gifts,

sacrifices, deep emotions do not make us Christians. No man is a soldier because he admires Grant or Lee; nor is he a Christian because pictures of holiness sometimes enchant his imagination. We are judged not by our song but by our service; not prayer but performance tests and measures us; not what we think and feel but what we are and what we do decides our standing in God's presence.

Sometimes too we are disposed to impute to ourselves virtues that do not properly belong to us. We pride ourselves upon our family connections. We are proud that we are Americans. We may be proud that we are Christians and members of the Brethren church. But all these count for little in determining your character as a man, a citizen, a Christian. The question is what have you been and done to enoble your family? What have you done as an American citizen to make politics purer and the American life truer, holier, nobler? What have you contributed to the sum total of Christian influences in the world? What have you done to make the Christianity of Christ more powerful at home and abroad? Why are you proud that you are a member of the Brethren church? Is it because the Brethren church is a spiritual church? What have you contributed out of your own experience and life to deepen the spiritual life of the church? Is it because the Brethren church is a growing, active church? What have you done and what are you now doing that the church may rightfully be looked upon as a growing, active church? Is it because the Brethren church is a missionary church? What have you done to awaken and spread the missionary spirit in the church? Are you yourself on fire for missions? Is the burden of lost souls weighing so heavily upon your heart that those who come in touch with you are set on fire for missions? What are you contributing to the mission work of the church? These are the questions by which we may determine our standing as Christians and as members of the Brethren church. It does not follow that you are spiritual because you hold your membership in a spiritual church, nor that you are generous and active because you belong to a church that is both generous and active. Many of us are deceiving ourselves just here. Would that we might see ourselves with the masks taken off! Would that we might see ourselves in the great light of the throne of God. We shall so see ourselves some day; for when the trumpets sound and all the disguises are taken away we shall be made to wonder when we find what we really were in this world. If we could stand for a moment in the white light that streams from God's throne, if we could stand in the clear vision of Christ himself looking upon us and thru us we would no longer deceive ourselves; and in that light only do we stand whether we know it or not.